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ABSTRACT

A project to develop curriculum materials geared to the immediate, specific language needs of limited English speaking foreign students at Douglas College (British Columbia, Canada) is reported. The materials designed were intended for orientation and acculturation, containing cultural content that could be integrated into the college's skill-oriented English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) academic program. The materials development process emphasized the use of feedback from language specialists, foreign student educators, ESL instructors, and classroom use. The first draft of the materials was designed and submitted to an initial round of feedback concerning the need for and utility of such materials. The second draft was published by the college, then evaluated by professionals and tested at Douglas College and Vancouver Community College (British Columbia). General practical application of the materials and additional or experimental applications were also considered in this phase of development. Local response to the text and feedback from publishers are reported. Acceptance of the third draft is documented, and future plans are discussed briefly. It was concluded that the materials have potential for wider application than initially intended. Letters, documents, forms, and a 65-item bibliography are appended. (MSE)

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ON WRITING A "HOMEGROWN" TEXT OF EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS: Intercultural Orientation Activities for International ESL Students: 50 Module Lessons

By
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B. A. (Sociology and Anthropology), Simon Fraser University, 1979

A MAJOR ESSAY SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
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We accept this Major Essay as conforming

to the required standard

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THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

July, 1990

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Overview

This paper is an account of writing a text of educational materials. Specifically, it describes the process of writing and the feedback loops used in developing a local 'homegrown' text, Intercultural Orientation Activities for International ESL Students: 50 Module Lessons. Essentially, the process described uses an 'organic' approach to developing materials for the on-the-spot needs of specific students and local teachers which, through feedback, are discovered to have more general applications for practice and implications for theory in teaching culture[2] with language[2] in ESL/International Education.

Introduction

This paper describes the process of writing a text of materials for a curriculum development project to culturally orient new international students at Douglas College (New Westminster, B. C.). I will begin by backgrounding the project, then will outline how the materials were conceived, designed and developed for Draft #1. Next, I will discuss the sources and methods of soliciting feedback on Draft #1, and the feedback's effect on Draft #2, which was published by the college in a text format. I will then examine the feedback loop process for Draft #2, and will illustrate how the materials can be more generally applied in teaching ESL/International Education. Next, in response to feedback received from a number of publishing houses, I will outline some theoretical insights gained for teaching culture[2] with language[2]. I will conclude with a description of Draft #3 (currently in progress for the next college printing of the text) and future plans for the materials.

Curriculum Development Project Background

In the Fall of 1986, Douglas College hired Linda Ironside, an ESL instructor who had taught EFL in China for three years, to serve as the cultural contact/resource person for four visiting Chinese scholars. Because the college did not at the time have a policy for accepting visa students, no infrastructure existed to address the needs and problems of visiting international students. Thus, Ms. Ironside was assigned the responsibilities of finding host families for the scholars, of liaising with the host families and their students, of assisting the students with their ESL and content studies at the college, and, generally, of helping them adjust to the new educational system and social life in Canada.

In her role as cultural resource person, Ms. Ironside sought out materials to use in culturally orienting ESL international students. In addition to her Douglas College colleagues, she consulted instructors from the U. B. C. Language Institute who had taught in orientation programs geared to Chinese students. She discovered, however, that

neither commercial nor teacher-developed materials were readily available (see Appendix 1a).

In response to this lack of materials/resources, Ms. Ironside began to develop her own materials; for example, a checklist conveying information which visiting students should be aware of when living with a host family -- e.g. where the mail is kept, how often laundry is done, how to pay for long distance telephone calls, etc. In further response to the students' needs (for specific information about Douglas College and living with host families, as well as a general understanding about the Canadian educational system and social life) Ms. Ironside continued to develop more materials. By the end of the Fall 1986 semester, she had concluded that a package of cultural orientation materials was essential for international students. (In addition to those students enrolled in the Summer Immersion Programs, the college had recently established a reciprocal relationship with Momoyama College in Japan whereby students of either institution could take credit courses at the other. These visiting students were to arrive in July 1987, and would be enrolled in the regular Academic ESL Program for one year.)

Because developing material packages is time consuming, Ms. Ironside first asked her colleagues if they thought the proposal for cultural orientation materials would be useful. The answer was yes. Ms. Ironside was encouraged to write a proposal to the College's Innovative Funds Committee (see

Appendix 1a). The committee approved the project; however, due to illness, Ms. Ironside was unable to carry it out on her own. A second person was recruited to take on the project, under Ms. Ironside's guidance. That person was myself.

I. Draft #1: Package of Materials

A) Conceptual Framework

In establishing a framework for the content of the cultural orientation materials, our guiding principle was to help students become educationally successful and socially adjusted, as well as more proficient in ESL. Two major cultural content categories emerged from the application of this principle: the educational and the social. Both of these broad cultural content areas were divided into general and specific content areas, the educational consisting of "Scholastic Culture" (general) and "Douglas College" (specific), and the social consisting of "The Acculturation Process" (general) and "Host Family Living" (specific). (In Draft #2, "Scholastic Culture" was renamed "Educational Preparation" and "The Acculturation Process" became "Social Adaptation".) Within the above four module areas, topics based on the students' specific needs were developed, 25 addressing their educational needs and 25 their social. Topics needed for learning ESL were embedded in the

"Educational Preparation" and "Social Adaptation" module areas.

The students' cultural orientation needs were determined from a variety of sources. These included: extensive readings on teaching culture[2] with language[2] and intercultural communication (see bibliography in the published text); existing ESL materials for teaching culture[2] (see asterisked entries in the bibliography of the published text); Ms. Ironside's cross-cultural knowledge gained from living and teaching in mainland China for three years; my own bi-cultural experiences, having been a visa student at Simon Fraser University and having immigrated to Canada; input and feedback from colleagues at Douglas College and U. B. C.; interviews with Douglas College counsellors who had counselled a previous group of Lebanese international students; and, host family written comments concerning their hosted students. (Cultural content topics which did not adhere to our guiding principle or for which commercial materials were already available were not developed.)

1. Targeted Students

The students targeted for the cultural orientation materials were international students new to Canada and the B. C. Lower Mainland. These students differed from the College's resident/community international ESL students

insofar as the former were 'sojourners'; i.e., eventually, they would return to their culture[1]. But, as we shall see later, the cultural content needs of both these groups overlap considerably.

As well as being sojourners, the targeted students were at an intermediate level of English proficiency, which at Douglas College includes those students enrolled in 100 - 300 level skills-based courses. (The College has four levels of language skill courses [reading, writing, speaking and listening] with the fourth level being a college preparation program.) Using TOEFL scores, the targeted intermediate level students would be at the same level as students whose scores ranged from 400 - 500. (This is the current average range of scores for Douglas College students enrolled in 100 - 300 level courses in the ESL Academic Program.)

As regards the age level of the targeted students, Ms. Ironside and I did not formally articulate what it would be. Rather, we assumed that they would be post-secondary students, their ages therefore ranging from 18 to 30 years on average. However, as we shall also see later, many of the materials developed can be used/adapted for use both with high school and adult students.

2. Targeted Programs

In terms of program use, we anticipated the orientation materials being used mainly as a separate strand of cultural content which could be thematically integrated into the skill-based courses of the College's ESL Academic Program. We also foresaw them being used with visiting international students enrolled in the Summer Immersion Programs. Because the College did not yet accept international students for admission (except under special conditions), we did not anticipate the materials being used for a cultural orientation program per se.

3. Targeted Personnel

As for who would use the materials, we basically had the ESL instructors at the College in mind; but, because of Ms. Ironside's role as the cultural resource/contact person for the Chinese scholars, we realized that the materials could also be used by other cultural resource personnel at the College, including language and culture assistants, counsellors, or monitors.

B. Designing, Developing and Organizing the Materials

In developing the initial draft of lesson materials, Ms. Ironside and I did not set out with a clearly articulated set of guidelines in mind. Instead, perhaps due to the somewhat unusual nature of our working contract (Ms. Ironside, working at home, was given 1/4 responsibility for the project, and myself 3/4) we generated and divided up the fifty module lesson topics, with Ms. Ironside focusing on the educational category and myself on both the social and educational.

Although we did not define an explicit set of guidelines for developing the individual lesson topics, we did understand (if only intuitively) that the cultural orientation lessons should do the following:

1. In the case of students acquiring specific cultural information, the lessons should enable them to access this information more readily than they would on their own.
2. In the case of students acquiring general cultural understanding, the lessons should enable them to become more aware of and sensitive to their cultural experiences.

Thus, working independently of each other and with few commercial or teacher-developed resources to draw upon, we utilized whatever sources of information we could find in developing lessons. These sources included Douglas College publications (e.g. the Douglas College Student Handbook and the Douglas College Calendar); ESL textbooks for teaching culture[2]; and academic readings on language[2] learning, acculturation, and intercultural communication. Drawing on these kinds of resources, we were able to devise various exercises, for example, skimming and scanning exercises dealing with the College and its systems, and design true and false statements about the values, beliefs, and assumptions of culture[2].

Thus, in our initial draft we produced a total of 50 lessons in the four module areas. These lessons could be used as a resource binder for teaching culture[2] orientation to new intermediate-level international students. The materials, however, perhaps due to our idiosyncratic approach to developing them, were not a cohesive package and lacked a standardized lesson format. Nevertheless, in the relatively unexplored area of material development for teaching culture[2] with language[2] (see asterisked entries in the bibliography of Appendix 2) they did, minimally, provide instructors with a basis for developing their own lesson materials using the cultural orientation topics we had targeted in the package of materials. Maximally, they provided a basis for instructors to adapt the lessons to

suit their own preferences or to pilot them 'as is' for their improvement.

C. Feedback Loop #1

1. Methods and Sources

Once the initial draft of the modules was complete, I proceeded to solicit feedback, employing five basic methods. These included:

1. Presenting the materials to a professional development meeting held at the U. B. C. Language Institute, and leaving copies of both the materials and evaluation forms (see Appendix 3).
2. Having a U. B. C. instructor, Ms. Patricia Fodor, pilot many of the lessons in her cultural orientation program for Indonesian educators.
3. Speaking informally to instructors at both U. B. C. and Douglas College.
4. Having the ESL convenor at Douglas College, Ms. Meg Hoppe, distribute the modules to instructors for written comment.
5. Using as many of the lessons as possible in the courses and programs I was teaching at the time.

2. Responses Generated

Some of these methods of soliciting feedback generated more response than others. For example, the evaluation form produced little feedback. In contrast, Ms. Fodor's piloting of the materials produced an abundance of comments; she commented most helpfully on every lesson in all four modules. However, as far as producing guidelines for further developing the materials, I did not use either of the above responses. Instead, because the project was intended primarily for students and instructors at Douglas College, it was the Douglas instructors' comments which, ultimately, served as guidelines in the revision of Draft #1.

3. Feedback Received

In general, the feedback was positive. All the instructors who had examined the materials agreed there was a need for them. However, the individual lessons were evidently somewhat problematic. For instance, one instructor felt they were rather patronizing, particularly in their overuse of too-obvious true/false statements. Another instructor thought the vocabulary level was too high for intermediate students and that there was "too much language for the students to plow through". A third instructor felt the materials were, in some cases, too

abstract -- i.e. that topics such as bi-cultural identity were too academic for the targeted students.

4. Feedback Conclusions

From all the above feedback, I concluded that there was a real need for cultural orientation materials but that the initial draft would need extensive revision in order to make the lessons more accessible both to teachers and students. Consequently, because the initial project had already been financed by the College-at-large through the Innovative Funds Committee, I approached the Manager of Douglas's Center for International Education, Mr. Tad Hosoi, with a request for additional funds. Mr. Hosoi indicated that no funds were presently available, but suggested I apply for a grant from the Association of Canadian Community Colleges Small Project Fund. With Mr. Hosoi's assistance, I drafted and submitted a proposal, which proved successful (see Appendix 1b).

II. Draft #2: Douglas College's Publication of the Materials

A) Revisions #1

1) Guidelines

In contrast to when we were developing the first draft, I now had some specific guidelines to apply to revising/creating the lessons in the Draft #2 Project. As a result of the comments offered by my Douglas colleagues, I had established three principal guidelines:

1. The lessons should address an adult audience.
2. The language used should be simple.
3. The lessons should use as little language as possible.

In further response to the Douglas instructors' feedback, and in applying these broad guidelines when revising Draft #1, other guidelines, more specific, emerged. They included:

1. The activities should be open-ended and discovery-based.
2. The activities should be, predominantly, oral.
3. The lesson activities should vary.

4. The lesson activities should be interactive.
5. The lessons should be limited to a single page.
6. The main activity should have 8 - 10 items only for students to respond to.
7. The lessons should include an introduction drawing upon students' experiences.

2. Lesson Patterns

By combining the above general and specific guidelines, an overall standardized lesson format emerged, a traditional one which included: an introduction to the lesson, directions for completing a main activity, the main lesson activity itself, and follow-up tasks for applying the acquired specific information or general knowledge. The lessons themselves combined interactive cultural awareness activities with predominantly oral communication language practice. The standardized one-page lessons also included 'user-friendly' features such as:

1. Enclosing the various sections of the lessons in boxes, with the entire lesson in its own box.
2. Using bold-face type to help delineate the different sections of the lessons and to highlight key words or activities.
3. Having page numbers correspond to module lesson numbers.
4. Identifying and underlining the language activity involved in the main lesson.

5. Including an answer key for the 'close-ended' lessons (these were mostly the Douglas College orientation lessons) indicated with three asterisks in the pages' right-hand corners.

3) Approach to Teaching Cultural Orientation

What emerged from the application of the above guidelines and from the process of standardizing the lessons in the Draft #2 Project was, essentially, an intuitive grounding of an approach to teaching cultural orientation in ESL/International Education. That is, although in our initial draft we were not guided by any explicit or well-defined theoretical guidelines, the revised version did appear to embody an approach to teaching cultural orientation to ESL International students. Specifically, in neither the lessons addressing specific cultural information nor those addressing general cultural knowledge were the students ever <u>passively</u> given the information/knowledge, as in a traditional lecture format. Rather, in all the lessons, students were required to be <u>active</u> participants in the educational process. Thus, the lessons' patterned emphasis was on getting students to find out the facts for themselves or to arrive at their understanding by interacting and by performing discovery/exploratory communication activities.

However, even though these revised lessons employed an active participant approach to teaching cultural orientation to ESL/international students and were published by the college, they varied so considerably from the original lessons that they would nonetheless need to be piloted.

B) Feedback Loops

This time, however, in addition to soliciting feedback on the materials as a potential resource package for teachers, I also concentrated on getting specific feedback on the individual revised lessons by having various instructors teaching at different institutions in a variety of programs (including myself) pilot them 'as is'. I also sought input from ESL Program and Department Heads at various institutions, as well as from some of the major North American educational publishing houses regarding the modules' potential for future consideration/publication. The following section, then, reports on the feedback process for Draft #2 and its results.

1. U. B. C. Language Institute

Because I had already presented the rough draft of the materials at the U. B. C. Language Institute, and because the Institute subsequently incorporated a few of the lessons into their Academic Study Skills Program, I decided to begin

my Draft #2 feedback quest there. My methods of soliciting response included:

1) Distributing copies to the coordinators of the Academic, Communication, Special and Pacific Rim Programs.

2) Placing two complimentary copies in the teachers' resource library to replace the Draft #1 version.

3) Giving a presentation at a professional development meeting (on how the materials were developed and organized, and how they could be used in various programs).

4) Speaking informally with instructors after the presentation and at every available opportunity thereafter.

The U. B. C. feedback was overwhelmingly positive and encouraging. Response included enthusiastic 'thank you' notes and appreciative remarks from instructors (e.g. "I wish I had the time to develop materials like these"). However, the most valuable response, in terms of future revision, was the written comment of a study skills instructor: "How much of this does the student need?" This comment made me aware that the materials were meant only to serve as a teachers' resource binder for teaching cultural orientation; they were intended to be selectively used in a students' needs-based curriculum approach to teaching cultural orientation. This point, then, would have to be clarified in a revised publication.

2. INTERAC Symposium

My next opportunity for soliciting feedback came at the INTERAC SYMPOSIUM '87 (Sponsored by INTERACTION, An Association of International Educators), when I co-presented with John Redmond, Coordinator of the Pacific Rim Orientation Center at U. B. C. Language Institute, on the subject of teaching cultural orientation programs to, in Mr. Redmond's case, government sponsored, and in my own, privately funded international ESL students. Though my main purpose was to present these newly published materials, I was also provided with some unexpected feedback in the form of questions put to me by members of the audience and by comments made to me after the presentation.

The two responses most useful in terms of future revisions came from Mr. Art Hamilton, CIDA Project Developer, from the B.C. Ministry of Advanced Education and Job Training, (INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION) who asked how many of the lessons could be used in a cultural orientation program and how would we know when we had used enough. Later, while purchasing a copy of the text, Mr. Hamilton stated that, although he was not a teacher, the materials were useful to him because they identified some of the problem areas for international students.

These responses were both helpful. In the first case, I realized that, because the foci of the lessons were all problem-centered, it was possible to use too many of them with the same group of students; therefore, in order for the

lessons to be effective they would need to be interspersed with a variety of other types of lesson activities in a cultural orientation program. The second comment made me realize that developing cultural orientation materials was, indeed, a frontier area of ESL/International Education. These observations would need to be incorporated into a future revised edition of the text.

3) Douglas College

After the U. B. C. and INTERAC feedback, I felt it was important also to solicit comment from Douglas College instructors teaching in various programs and at different levels. Thus, I arranged to give a presentation to the instructors teaching in the Summer Bursary Program '89, with the object of demonstrating how the module lessons could be used. To get feedback from those teaching in the Academic Program, I informally asked individual instructors if they had made use of any of the materials, and if so, how the lessons had (or had not) worked.

Because the Summer Bursary Program has wrap-up evaluation meetings, I was able to arrange an adjunct focus session on which lessons the instructors had used, how they used them, and whether or not they had worked (and why). This session, however, yielded few critical suggestions, aside from a query concerning a complex grammatical construction and another regarding the problematic term

'international students' in lessons which were being used to teach groups of Japanese and French-Canadian students.

Instead of critiquing the individual lessons, the instructors chose to share and compare which lessons they had used, how they had used them and why. Factors influencing their choices included:

1) Their students' language levels.

2) Their students' current experiences while living in culture[2].

3) The group dynamics of their classes. Their other comments addressed the mechanics of using the lessons - e.g. with partners, in a discussion group, or as a whole program. (It was decided in the presentation meeting to use Module #30 "Host Family Expectations" as a homework contact assignment for all the students and host families participating in the program.)

The feedback from instructors teaching in the regular Academic Program was similar to that of the Bursary '89 instructors. Comments mainly dealt with which lessons they had used, and how and why they had used them. For example, one instructor reported using Module #42 "Going Back Home" for a final in-class essay assignment. Using the questions that had been designed to prepare students for the trip home to culture[1] (see Appendix 2) she had the resident international students interview their sojourner fellow students who were about to return home. The questions and answers were then used as a supportive writing device to

help students develop a more organized and cohesive essay. Later, the essays of both the interviewers and interviewees were compared for their consistency.

Overall, the response from both groups of Douglas College instructors was positive, with neither group critiquing individual lessons to any great extent. In terms of revising specific lessons, the feedback was not very useful. However, the feedback concerning how the lessons were used in different ways with different groups of students in different programs was quite useful, since it provided me with new ideas and better understanding as to how the materials could be used.

4) Vancouver Community College

Shortly after discussing the lessons with the two sets of Douglas College instructors, I was contacted by Barbara Richards Forester, Coordinator of the International Education Program at Vancouver Community College (King Edward Campus). Ms. Forester was seeking permission to use some of my lessons for her institution's Cultural Orientation Program '89. I gave my consent, together with a request that I receive feedback from the V. C. C. instructors on how the lessons fared. The coordinator selected five of the cultural orientation module lessons: 1) "Student Expectations" (#17); 2) "Tasks for Learning English Outside the Classroom" (#18); 3) "The Ideal Teacher"

(#23); 4) "The Ideal Student" (#22); and 5) The "Good Language Learner" (#21). After the Cultural Orientation Program was completed, I was invited to attend the wrap-up session in which all the instructors were asked to orally evaluate the various elements of the program, including my five cultural orientation lessons.

At the meeting I was first provided with feedback regarding some of the instructors' problems teaching in the V. C. C. Cultural Orientation Program, as well as my own lessons. Some of the problems/issues raised included:

1) Mandatory vs. optional orientation programs.

2) The wide variation in students' language fluency.

3) The need to assess students' language abilities prior to teaching them.

4) The need for cultural profiles of students for teacher planning.

5) The danger of doing so much orientation that the students infer they need to assimilate into the Canadian culture (instead of adapt to it).

Within the above context, my five module lessons were used by all three instructors. In contrast to the generally positive comments from the Douglas instructors, the V. C. C. feedback tended to be more specific and critical. The three instructors unanimously approved using Module #21 "The Good Language Learner" and Module #18 "Tasks for Learning English Outside the Classroom". (One of them thought that the vocabulary in #18 was too advanced for her low-level

students, but nonetheless felt that the content warranted completing the lesson). They were also unanimous in their comments concerning the other three lessons (#17 "Student Expectations", #22 "The Ideal Student" and #23 "The Ideal Teacher"). They felt that the language level required for students to perform these activities was too high; consequently, all three of them had to adapt the activities 'on-the-spot' to meet their students' needs.

The specific critiquing of the five orientation lessons proved valuable. It suggested that the more conceptually abstract lessons were also more linguistically demanding for students (and teachers). For revision purposes, I now had a better sense of which lessons were problematic, or potentially so. I also concluded that these problematic lessons would need to be made more student-experienced based. Both of these insights would have to be brought to bear upon a future revised edition.

C) General Practical Applications of the Modules

In addition to soliciting response from instructors teaching in other programs and at other institutions, I took advantage of every opportunity to use/adapt the culture[2] orientation lessons in the course of my own teaching. These opportunities included teaching in the Academic, Summer Bursary, and Cultural Orientation Programs at Douglas College. These classroom trial experiences, combined with my previous teaching experiences (at U. B. C. and V. C. C.) and my presenting the materials at professional development meetings and conferences, allowed me to explore the many different ways in which a given lesson could be used. The following section, then, illustrates how the materials can be used in a variety of ways for most ESL/International Education Programs.

1) Illustrative Example

Lesson #47 "Male and Female Roles" (see Appendix 2, p. 122) requires students to respond to a number of general

statements concerning men and women - e.g. "Women are more sensitive than men". As a follow-up activity, students are asked to compare and contrast the role of males and females in culture[1] and culture[2].

In order to develop general communication skills, the students are asked to evaluate these statements by expressing their opinions; also, in giving a reason for their opinions, the students are practicing quantifying statements. The lesson activity can also be used in composition courses by having students write topic sentences using the general statements as a starting point. The same materials could be adapted to a speaking course by having the students work in pairs/groups to try to reach concensus about the statements.

2) Program Uses

By means of these lesson(s) activity(s) or variations of them, students can practice language rhetorical patterns of expressing opinions, as well as comparing and contrasting ideas, and making generalizations and specific statements. They can also practice language functions such as agreeing/disagreeing with others, providing reasons and examples in support of their opinions, and persuading others of the validity of their ideas. Furthermore, students can practice language structures such as adjectives in comparing and contrasting sex roles in culture[1] and culture[2], modals

in responding with their opinions of the roles of men and women, and conditionals in generating qualifiers for topic sentences or for a concensus reaching activity.

Because the lesson(s) integrate culture[2] content with language[2] practice, they can be used in most ESL/International Education programs. To illustrate, the materials can be used in cultural orientation programs in which the curriculum focuses on culture[2] general knowledge and specific information. They also can be used in academic programs where the focus is on acquiring the four language skills using language rhetorical patterns; or in communication programs focusing on general language proficiency using a combination of themes, functions, language structure, rhetorical patterns and language skills; or in traditional programs focusing on grammar.

3) Student Uses

Beyond their suitability to most ESL/International Education programs, many of the modules can be used with various groups/groupings of students, i.e. according to their immigration status, cultural background, language fluency, and age level. For example, in the Douglas College Academic Program, which combines visiting international ESL students with resident (community) ones, Module #46 "Making Friends With British Columbians" was found useful because it addresses the needs of both groups: both visiting and

resident international students need to become socially adapted in order to make educational and language[2] progress. Similarly, in cultural orientation programs for students of homogeneous cultural backgrounds, and in communication programs for students of mixed cultural backgrounds, both groups/groupings of students were found to benefit from lessons which motivated and promoted the students to become independent learners - e.g. Module #11 "Individual Goals and Evaluations for Learning English". Because the modules include both a main and a follow-up activity(s), they were also found to be well-suited to groups/groupings of students with higher/lower-levels of language[2] proficiency: higher-level students can complete all the lesson activities and lower-level students just the main one. Finally, as regards age level, because the materials are experience based and adult oriented, they are best suited to secondary, post-secondary, and adult students. For example, Module #10 "Communication Problems in the Classroom", addresses issues common to all of these students.

4) Teaching Uses

Although the modules were intended, primarily, as self-contained cultural orientation lessons, they can be used for many other teaching purposes. They can be assigned as preparatory homework - e.g. prior to a library tour or library lab assignment, students can benefit by completing

Module #3 "Library Skills and the Douglas College Library Handout". Or, the modules may be used as in-class preparation activities for a different main activity - e.g. students can complete Module #41 "Feelings About Speaking English in the New Culture" in order to prepare for an in-class writing assignment on the topic. The materials can be used as follow-up lessons - e.g. if students were to complete a contact assignment unsatisfactorily, Module #45 "Making Contact with Native Speakers" could serve as a 'repair' lesson or could be assigned as homework. (In some cases, I discovered that one module lesson could be used to prepare for another - e.g. Module #13 "Tasks for Learning English Outside the Classroom" can be used as preparation for Module #11 "Individual Goals and Evaluations for Learning English".)

D) Exploratory Applications of the Materials

1) Program Uses

Further to using the materials in different ESL/International Education Programs and with different groups/groupings of students or for different teaching purposes, many of them could be employed in exploratory pre- and post-cultural orientation programs (pre-cultural programs would be held in culture[1]; the post-cultural in culture[2].) For instance, in pre-cultural orientation programs for short immersion programs, students could prepare for their new cultural experiences with Module #30 "Host Family Expectations of Students"; for longer Academic Programs, Module #19 "Teacher Expectations of Students" might prove helpful. Students in post-cultural orientation programs could prepare for their return to culture[1] (especially after a lengthy stay) with Module #42 "Going Back Home"; or, in order to maintain their culture[2] and language[2] fluency levels in culture[1], students could do 'past tense' adaptations of the lessons - e.g. Module #35 "Adjusting to a Different Way of Life".

2) Personnel Uses

The modules could also be used profitably by non-teaching personnel involved in ESL/International Education. Counsellors, for instance, could use #40 "Feeling Homesick" to conduct group sessions for visiting/resident international ESL students. Language and cultural program assistants might conduct a health and safety information session using #29 "Health and Safety Information". Student advisors could orient students to the college's systems by using modules such as #6 "Information in the Douglas College Calendar" or #7 "Information in the Student Handbook (Douglas College)". Language and cultural monitors could orient students to the college campus using Module #2 "Campus Orientation" or Module #8 "Library Skills and the Douglas College Library Handout". (Other institutions could adapt the materials to their students' needs.)

E) Limitations of the Materials

Although the orientation modules can be used/adapted for use by various personnel in a variety of ways and for most ESL/International Education programs, some limiting factors were noted in field-testing them. It was observed, for example, that some modules were less useful when part of a class had already completed a culture orientation program. Also, certain modules were not suited to classes comprised of students from dissimilar cultural backgrounds who, consequently, had widely varying needs (e.g. students from Eastern and Middle Eastern countries). It was also noted that careful selection of modules was necessary when classes consisted of students with a wide range of language proficiency, i.e. so that the lessons would be neither too simple linguistically nor too demanding. Too, because of the modules' flexibility, the possibility exists of students repeating lessons in different programs and levels at the same or different institutions. (In an effort to identify other limitations to the modules' usefulness, an evaluation form was appended to the text for further feedback; however, none has been received to date.)

F) Local Response to the Text of Materials

Despite the above limitations, the text has been well-received by local ESL instructors and other personnel in the field of ESL/International Education. Many copies of the text were sold following my presentations to the INTERAC Symposium '89 and the TEAL '90 Conference, and many more have been ordered through Douglas College's Center for International Education. In addition, a number of ESL instructors who are going to be working with international students or in cultural orientation programs outside of the Lower Mainland have contacted me to purchase a copy. The text is presently in its second printing; the first one hundred and fifty copies were quickly sold/distributed.

G) Feedback From Publishers

Because of the demand for the materials, I decided to also solicit feedback from a number of leading North American publishing companies, including Random House, Newbury, Janus, Longmans, and Addison-Wesley. In most cases I did this by submitting a sampling of the materials, though in some cases I forwarded a copy of the complete text. In all cases, I expressed my interest in determining whether the publisher might be interested in the materials either 'as is' or in a future revised version.

The response ranged from fairly strong expressions of interest to no response at all. Of interest to me, in terms of further developing the materials, were the various rationales offered for rejection. For example, Janus Books (Alemany Press) said they were not interested because most of their books are aimed at adult and secondary school ESL programs. Addison-Wesley referred to the project as having some "pretty good conversation starters that could be used in a speaking/conversation course" but that there was no (emphasis theirs) market for a text that was limited to use

in orientation programs. Longmans felt that the text's appeal was not broad enough, that the potential market was not large enough, and that the materials would need to provide information about North America that students could compare their own culture to.

These responses, though negative for marketing reasons, were nonetheless valuable insofar as they increased my awareness of the assumptions and premises I had operated on in developing the text. For example, I had assumed that ESL teachers using the materials would be experienced, and that the materials' uses (and potential uses) would be self-evident. Consequently, I did not include a guide identifying various ways in which the materials could be used or adapted in various ESL programs. Also, because the project was a 'home-grown' one, developed for specific students with their cultural needs in mind, I did not provide a rationale for developing the materials. These publishers' comments, then, helped me consider how the text might be further developed for a wider audience.

H) Theoretical Implications of the Materials

1) Cultural Framework

As an aid to further developing the materials, Longmans' suggestion that I use a comparative (or contrastive analysis) model for the cultural orientation lessons was valuable insofar as it made me aware of the cultural context I had assumed. That is, because the students were studying with classmates from different language and cultural backgrounds; because many of the students were living with host families who themselves were L^2 speakers of English (e.g. Japanese students living with Italian host families); and because the students were living in a multicultural society (the Lower Mainland of B.C., and Canada as a whole), I had, necessarily, worked within a multicultural framework when developing the lessons. Consequently, cultural norms could not be confidently identified. (I also realized at this point why Ms. Ironside and I had avoided using 'cultural capsules', 'cultural assimilators', and 'critical incidents', [Seelye, 1974] namely, because they made or required too many generalizations about a given culture.)

2) Teaching Approach

Besides the suggestion for identifying differences between culture[1] and culture[2] norms, the reader for Longmans provided further valuable feedback on the sample lessons submitted. Most useful were comments regarding Module #9 "Class and Seminar Participation" to the effect that the questions - (e.g. "Are you a shy student?", "Do you wait for other students to express their opinions before expressing yours?", and "Do you always agree with the views of the student majority or with those of the teacher?") existed "in a vacuum" and "why was I asking?" The 'vacuum', I realized, was the assumed students' cultural experiences and knowledge about themselves which they could draw upon to respond to the questions. In making this assumption I realized that I had, in a sense, intuitively grounded a Socratic approach to teaching general culture[2] knowledge. The reason the students were being asked the open-ended, discovery-oriented questions (which had no correct answers per se) was to encourage them to reflect on the process of interacting with and understanding another culture while simultaneously raising awareness of one's own culture and oneself.

III. Draft #3

As a result of the comments offered by the publishing houses, ESL instructors and department heads, as well as through my own field-testing, I came to realize that yet another revision would be necessary. Therefore I drafted a proposal to the Douglas College ESL Discipline requesting funding to carry out a second revision of the materials. The proposal was accepted (see Appendix 1c).

The Draft #3 Project, currently underway, addresses four principal areas of concern:

1) Indexing the materials so that both experienced and inexperienced teachers can use them more readily.

2) Revising a number of overly abstract lessons to make them more concrete.

3) Adding teacher notes to the four module areas explaining (anecdotally) how the lessons can be used.

4) Re-writing the text's introduction to include an explanation of the rationale for the materials, the cultural context assumed in developing them, the approaches used for teaching cultural orientation (both specific culture[2] information and general culture[2] knowledge) and the intended behavioral outcome of getting students to 'augment' their

behavior in different contexts. (I derived this concept from an informal conversation with Mara Adelman, co-author of Beyond Language [1982], in which she expressed her belief, based on her experiences providing cross-cultural training, that people can not be expected to fundamentally change their behavior when working with members of different cultural groups, but can modify their behavior to some extent.)

IV. Future Plans for the Materials

Once the Draft #3 Project is completed and has been field-tested locally, in other parts of Canada, the U.S, and overseas, I plan to forward a copy of the second edition to various publishers together with a proposal covering the following:

1) An overview of the textbooks currently available for teaching culture[2] in ESL/International Education.

2) An explanation of how the commercially produced texts differ from my 'homegrown' local one.

3) A brief account of the local market and the success of the text.

4) An outline of the potential wider audiences for the materials.

5) Examples of how the materials feasibly could be adapted to be more universal in application.

Essentially, I will again express my interest in finding out if they might be interested in publishing a more universal adaptation of the materials (one which would,

however, remain specifically relevant to the needs of the originally targeted students).

Conclusion

In this paper, I have described the process of writing materials for the local text, Intercultural Orientation Activities for International ESL Students: 50 Module Lessons. I began by describing the 'seed' from which the materials sprang, i.e. the Douglas College curriculum project to develop cultural orientation modules for new International ESL students. After describing the initial drafting of the materials, I outlined my various feedback sources and methods, and their value in terms of further developing the materials. These 'feedback loops' resulted in Draft #2 which was published by Douglas College and an in-progress Draft #3 for a future college edition. Thus, what began as a curriculum development project for a particular set of students' needs and local teachers' preferences resulted, through feedback loops, in a text of educational materials which have more general application for practice and implications for theory regarding teaching culture^2 with language^2. That is, in practical terms, the materials can be used for teaching in most ESL/International Education programs. In theoretical terms, the materials

embody an 'active participant' approach to teaching cultural orientation (both specific cultural information and general cultural knowledge) and have grounded a Socratic approach to teaching general culture[2] knowledge within a multicultural or 'global village' framework.

One of the main factors contributing to the usefulness of the materials was the 'homegrown' approach; that is, the practical 'on-the-spot' needs of the students and the preferences of local teachers were the major considerations in the curriculum development process. This approach was important because it served several necessary functions:

1) It established the parameters and scope of the project - i.e. only cultural orientation materials for which there were no commercially available materials would be developed (this excluded developing lessons on, e.g., "Opening a Bank Account").

2) It generated the framework for developing the cultural content - i.e. only the students' immediate social and educational needs directly affecting their academic success and social adjustment would be developed (this excluded cultural content such as Canadian Social Studies).

3) It served as the baseline for evaluating the materials - i.e. whether or not the lessons had succeeded in meeting the culture[2] and language[2] needs of the targeted students (and the preferences of teachers using the materials).

The second important factor contributing to the usefulness of the materials was the use of feedback loops.

These loops were formed by soliciting responses from local ESL/International Education educators and publishers using a variety of sources and methods. And, although the resulting general evaluations were easier to obtain and more positive in nature, it was the harder-to-obtain and more negative diagnostic evaluations which, ultimately, were most useful (particularly in developing 'homegrown' materials) because they did the following:

1) They generated both the broad and specific guidelines to apply to further revisions of the materials.

2) They provided a better understanding of how the materials could be used in a variety of teaching contexts.

3) They fostered insights into the cultural context used for developing the materials and the theoretical approaches used for teaching cultural orientation (both specific information and general knowledge) and general culture[2] knowledge.

In the future, perhaps we can as educators begin to re-envision curriculum development projects as potential seeds from which other local homegrown texts of materials can be developed. Ideally, by actively participating in the materials writing process, we can begin to establish an acceptable alternative to instructors having to develop all their own materials or to do extensive adaptations of 'canned' ones in order to meet pedagogical demands. Perhaps, also, in this process of developing other homegrown texts of materials, we can begin to initiate and generate

more dialogue with researchers and theoreticians in ESL/International Education.

APPENDIXES

PROPOSAL:	ESL Curriculum Development
DATE:	December 18, 1986.
INTENDED SCHEDULE:	1 semester-87-1 (100 hours)
FINANCIAL REQUIREMENT:	$3,560 (equivalent of 1 section)
FROM:	E.S.L. Discipline
CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT PLAN:	Search into presently available materials on 4 module subjects; library research on acculturation process and scholastic culture; gathering of relia and text; preparation of worksheets. Material; collect and adapt present library student orientation materials.
Submitted by:	Linda Ironside

Background

The 5-year plan for Douglas College includes a commitment to international education: "Douglas College intends to utilize its con- siderable expertise and existing contacts in teaching English as a Second Language and in Health and Social Services training, and intends to market such programs (student and faculty exchange programs) to the international community." (Strategic Plan up-date submitted to the Ministry of Education, November, 1986.)

The ESL discipline has been instructing international students in various programs for some time. Examples are the yearly program for students from Momoyama University in Japan and the recent students sponsored by the Hariri Foundation in Lebanon. An introduction to Canadian culture is always an integral part of the courses given. "We do our students a disservice if we don't teach them the social rules along with the linguistic rules." (Paulston, 1974). Students from the P.R.C. who will be studying here in the spring semester will be provided a brief introduction to life and study expectations in Canada. Such orientation has cognitive as well as affective goals.

Rationale

1. It has long been recognized in linguistic and sociological literature that language and culture are inextricably linked, that attitudes toward the host culture are an important element in the motivation of the L2 learner. After discussing the studies by Gardner and Lambert, 1972, and by Oller, Hudson and Liu, 1977, Brown concludes: "It seems clear that the second language learner benefits from postive attitudes and that negative attitudes may lead to decreased motivation and in all likelihood unsuccessful attainment of proficiency." (Brown, p.26)

2. A less researched phenomenon, but one found consistently by ESL teachers at the college level is that many students attending post-secondary schools in N.A. undergo a considerable process of acculturation to the "scholastic culture" (Longsreet), its methods, values and expectations.

   The ESL discipline wants, therefore, to develop materials for the purpose of helping international students to achieve their potential in studies here, by providing orientation materials on 4 topics for which commercial or discipline-produced products are presently not available.

Project Objectives

4 modules written at an intermediate level of English proficiency, for use by individual students or by an instructor with a class. Each is an independent set of materials, with worksheets and exercises, as well as reading test.

1. The acculturation process. Helping students to become aware of culture shock, a processess which can inhibit learning. An introduction to intercultural communication.

2. Douglas College. An introduction to the college as a whole, its services and facilities, is done on an ad hoc basis. No prepared materials are available to supplement those produced for all students, or to deal specifically with the needs of foreign students in understanding their new environment..

3. Scholastic culture. An intrdouction to teaching methods (and the variety one is likely to find), schedules, grading, teacher vs. student roles, expectations of students. This module would seek advice from Counsellors, and attempt to adapt materials already available for L1 students to make them suitable for foreign students, and address particular problem areas.

4. Homestay Program. Providing some structured materials for the families participating in programs in the capacity of host family. They are recognized as an important part of L2 students' linguistic progress, their cultural awareness, and their emotional well-being. Students learn a lot through spontaneous conversation with them. The materials we would provide could introduce new families to an intercultural experience, and give concrete conversation starters. Students would also be given an introduction to Canadian home and family life, and the customs one might find.

douglas college

Linda

(604) 520-5400 700 Royal Avenue, New Westminster, B.C. Mailing Address: P.O. Box 2503, New Westminster, B.C. V3L 5B2

January 11, 1988

Small Project Grant
Association of Canadian Community Colleges
110 Eglinton Avenue West
Toronto, Ontario
M4R 1A3

Dear Sir/Madam:

Handbooks for International Students and Their Hosts

Please find an enclosed application for Small Project Grant for a project (Production of Handbooks for International Students and Their Hosts) at Douglas College.

The production of a series of handbooks for international students and their hosts (host familiy members, instructors and staff members at colleges) was originally planned for international students who would be studying at Douglas College and other community colleges. The ESL Discipline of Douglas College worked on some early drafts and tried them on several occasions to find out their validity. To their delight, they worked well not only with international students but also with host family members, instructors and staff members at the college. Because of the carefully prepared contents, they served the needs of international students very well, and at the same time, they clearly identified problems and difficulties international students have.

The same format was successfully tested with Canadian students who were travelling to China and Japan and we can foresee tremendous value of these handbooks for Canadians who plan to live in a foreign country for an extended period of time.

Douglas College is now planning to work further on this project and hopes to pubish these materials. A sum of $3,560 is committed by the college to cover the salary of a specialist for a four-month period to do rewriting and editing. We would be grateful therefore if the Small Project Grant Program could contribute a sum of $3,000 to our project to cover a part of the printing and distribution of the handbooks, as well as some miscellaneous costs.

As indicated, the preliminary versions have been used on an

...../2

experimental basis in the last two years at Douglas College. And it will be field-tested by the English Language Institute at the University of British Columbia next year. When they are published, Douglas College will make these handbooks available to any interested institutions.

If you have any questions please contact me at (604) 520-5400, local 4236 or Ms Linda Villarreal, local 4237.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Tad Hosoi

Tad Hosoi
Manager
Centre for International Education
Phone (604) 520-5400, local 4236

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

D O U G L A S C O L L E G E

INTER OFFICE MEMO August 29, 1989

To: ESL Faculty

From: Linda Villarreal

Re: Proposal to Revise Orientation Modules

In response to demand, we have run out of copies of the text (150 were printed in March; a second printing is in the works). I asked Tad Hosoi, who funded the project last year via the ACCC Small Project Fund, if he could fund the equivalent of a 1/4 time teaching section in order for me to do the necessary revisions and expansions, but his budget does not permit. Since he cannot help, I would like formally to request ESL Discipline members to approve funding (again, equivalent to a 1/4 time teaching section) for me to do the work during the Fall'89 semester.

Based on the feedback given Meg regarding my initial request in early August'89, I have outlined the following:

a. Sources of feedback which have been and will be used.

b. Content of the feedback (negative) given so far and methods for soliciting more in the immediate future.

c. Revision/expansion work to be undertaken and the amount of time required to complete these tasks.

d. Benefits for Douglas College and the local ESL community.

Project Outline

A) Sources of Feedback to date

1. A number of major educational publishing houses. (8?)

2. UBC Language Institute - Academic Program (Instructors teaching the Study Skill course)

3. Vancouver Community College - Cultural Orientation program for International Students (lower to advanced levels).

4. Douglas College (Bursary and Japanese Summer Programs)

N.B. (I also have used the lessons extensively in the regular academic program and for the Cultural Orientation Program of August '89.)

Future Sources of Feedback

(***Note) Presentations on using the modules have been made at UBC and to the Douglas College Bursary Program. I will also be presenting on September 8/89 to the VCC International Education instructors in the non-college prep program. Following my presentations, I plan to do teacher focus sessions on how the materials worked/didn't work and why/why not.

1. UBC Language Institute

(Presentation Completed)
(a. Pacific Rim Cultural Orientation Centre
(b. Academic Program
(c. Communication Program
(d. Special Programs

2. Vancouver Community College

(Presentation Completed)
(a. International Education (lower-to Advanced Levels)
b. International Education (College Prep. Program)

3. Douglas College

(Presentation Completed)
(a. Summer Programs (Bursary, Japanese, Summer Institute and Cultural Orientation).
b. Regular Academic Orientation Program (Some instructors have already used some of the lessons in the regular programs, but it would be helpful to get more feedback from other instructors).

4. Canadian International College? (Dr. Carol Thew and Mr.(?)Ian Andrews have requested me to make a presentation in the future for their instructors on how to use the materials).

5. Okanagan College (Roz Acutt, an ESL instructor, is going to be teaching there for 9 months starting this Fall and plans to use the text extensively)>

6. Vancouver School Board? (Ann Shorthouse and Catherine Eddy have copies of the text and tell me they are open to the possibility of piloting some of the materials for ESL secondary students).

(Presentation completed at INTERAC)

7. New Westminster School District (Jennifer Bazett, Coordinator of the International Education Program has used the materials extensively.

8. Other publishing houses (in addition to those I have already heard from); the text is currently with Prentice-Hall (Canada).

B. (Negative) Feedback To-Date

1. In general, readers seem to feel that the text is aimed at experienced teachers and makes too many assumptions regarding teachers' understanding of cultural orientation (within a multicultural context) using an ESL framework; therefore, more explanation and guidance are needed in the text.

   (Details are outlined in the revision/expansion section.)

2. More specifically, some of the individual lessons apparently are too abstract conceptually and, therefore, not easily accessible to lower-level students; thus, more concrete experienced-based activities are needed.

C. Revisions/Expansions to be Undertaken

1. Rewrite the introduction to clarify the teaching of cultural orientation within an ESL framework and multicultural context, and specifically to outline how the materials can be used in any ESL program for both international and resident students by instructors.
   *(1 week)

2. Add an index which would include the type of programs, type of students, language level of students, language skills, language functions and language structures appropriate to/inherent in each of the module lessons. (The index would be similar to the one in Barbara Bowers' DECISIONS.).
   *(1 week)

3. Use feedback already given and set up focus sessions (after presentations) to solicit more feedback, target the lessons which are too abstract, and make these more concrete. This might also include adding/changing topics already in the text, though the total number of module lessons would remain the same (50).
   *(1 week)

4. Add teacher notes for each lesson (on the back of each lesson pages) to give more detailed suggestions regarding possible uses/adaptations of each lesson. *(1 week)

D. Benefits for Douglas College and the Local ESL Community

1. By establishing a high publishing standard for a Douglas College publication, the college's reputation will be enhanced.

2. By using presentations and focus sessions for soiliciting feedback, the ESL Discipline and the Center for International Education will be considered forerunners in developing cultural orientation materials for international (and resident) students.

3. By making the understanding of teaching culture[2] within an ESL framework and in a multicultural context more accessible to ESL instructors, the task of teaching culture[2] fluency will be made much easier for instructors.

4. By making the lessons more concrete and experienced-based, ESL students will be helped better to develop, simultaneously, their culture[2] and language[2] fluency.

**** (The text currently sells for $14.00 a copy and the generated revenue could go back into the ESL Discipline's Revenue Account?).

(4 out of 4 pages)

Intercultural Orientation Modules: Feedback

If evaluating a module activity, please fill in the following information.

Module Area: (Circle)	**Module Topic and Number (Write In)**
Douglas College	_____
Educational Preparation	_____
Social Adaptation	_____
Host Family	_____

GENERAL QUESTIONS:

1. What type of ESL program did you use the module(s) in?

   _____

2. What type of cultural content/language skill were you teaching in using the module(s)?

   _____

3. What type of ESL students were in your class (language level, immigrant status, and cultural background)?

   _____

4. What was your objective in using the module(s)?

   _____

5. What (if any) related activities did you incorporate with using the module(s)?

   _____

6. How was the module(s) useful for your teaching purposes?

   _____

7. What problems (if any) did you find in using the module(s)?

   _____

8. What changes would you suggest? **(If recommending changes for a specific module, please attach a copy of it with your written suggestions.)**

   _____

9. How would you rate the overall success of the module(s)?

   _____

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